

collapsed through the unscrupulous activities of their husbands, to missionaries, adventurous young women doing secretarial work, and some women whom she just didn't like. Robins carefully notes the prospects and strategies of each woman and how they are making out in the dynamic environment of the North. Her descriptions of the vicious treatment of a young immigrant cook's assistant at a tent restaurant made me wince. She visited Sister Winifred of the Sisters of St. Anne at Holy Cross Mission during an epidemic. Her account of this visit, painted in sobering yet romantic word pastels, ends in the Sisters' garden, with a promise to send along both flower seeds and a rose bush (p. 224–225).

To help pay for the trip, Robins prepared articles for various publications. To this end she actively sought out longtime Northerners and interviewed them. She does a nice job of conveying the character of each interview through description of setting, even noting accents and pronunciation. Her account of a meeting with Captain Hansen of the Alaska Commercial Company provides a fascinating and highly informal history of the sealing industry company, its relations with the "Eskimos," and the despoliation of both when short-sighted American entrepreneurs broke the company's monopoly (p. 200–207). A similar report, of a casual conversation on a Yukon riverboat about the Alaska boundary dispute, was published as an article in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1903. The editors have thoughtfully included five of Robins' interesting articles describing northern life and gold mining in addition to the boundary piece.

In Nome, Robins also observed the freedom of the American frontier in practice. Although the idea of a free life at the frontier has been boiled down to a few trite phrases well ensconced in American mythology, Robins presents a far more complex vision of life on the edge. She enters with, and retains through her whole stay in the North, a strong consciousness of her class and the importance of proper introductions to people. However, her standard of what is proper is clearly flexible: by the end of her time in the North, her gregarious nature and the interesting people she meets have eroded the nature of the necessary introduction and connection. Nevertheless, she recognizes the hierarchical nature of society. On landing at Nome she observes, "All landed here free and equal from the common life of the ships. Twenty minutes and some were masters and others slaves of the circumstances awaiting them...—the old story." And arriving at her hotel, she notes the Black chambermaid: "It was curious to realize what a sense of home and "good old days" the black visage brought to this far-away land" (p. 70–71). At the same time, she notes with approval the community's support for the rights of an elderly Black woman defending her town lot from White claim jumpers. Clearly the freedom of the frontier was far from a simple, single truth.

In addition to her thoughts on the effect of the frontier, Robins was an acute observer of all facets of daily life in Nome. Her descriptions of church services, community

meetings, mining operations, and even a one-night pub crawl through the less savoury establishments of Nome, capped by a description of one man still suffering the effects of the previous nights celebrations, are wonderful excursions into the past. She must have spent hours every week composing her thoughts and recording them so completely in her diary. And the effort has preserved a wonderful set of experiences for us.

Elizabeth Robins' record of her trip to Alaska and Yukon provides a colourful and interesting view of the country. The photos and maps, the brief biographical summary of her life, and the detailed annotations of unfamiliar textual references provided by the editors are a splendid re-creation of the period through the eyes of a well-educated, yet open and interested observer on northern affairs.

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INCORPORATING THE FAMILIAR: AN INVESTIGATION INTO LEGAL SENSIBILITIES IN NUNAVIK. By SUSAN G. DRUMMOND. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7735-1671-9. x + 189 p., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$39.95.

In the past two decades, countless reports, articles, and books have investigated issues relating to the delivery of justice for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These publications have documented the contrast between justice values of Aboriginal peoples and European immigrants to this land, strategies for reforming the dominant justice system to accommodate these different values, and the legal bases for Aboriginal justice initiatives and systems. (See, for example, Monture-Okanee and Turpel, 1992; Inuit Justice Task Force, 1993; and Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996.)

Susan Drummond has entered this fray with a book that, from my standpoint as a legal scholar, adopts a unique perspective on the issues at hand. In her "investigation into legal sensibilities in Nunavik," Drummond draws on diverse disciplines, including philosophy, ethnography, cartography, psychology, and literary analysis, as well as more traditional legal analysis.

The book jacket does not tell us much about Drummond, other than the fact that at the time of publication, she was

a doctoral candidate at McGill University's Faculty of Law. In the introductory section of the book, we learn that she undertook field work in Nunavik for a few months in 1992 and 1993 as part of a joint degree in law and social work, and that she has drawn on these experiences in writing her book. We are left to assume that Drummond is not an Inuit woman, and are told nothing of the challenges and concerns of writing from a position of privilege in this context.

Organizationally, *Incorporating the Familiar* employs a novel structure. Generally speaking, the book's three sections explore the delivery of justice in Inuit communities in Nunavik (northern Quebec), the problem of family violence in these communities, and the success of the first sentencing circle in Nunavik. In turn, each section alternates between subsections of narrative and theory, designed to have the reader move from the "concrete and particular" to the "abstract and theoretical" (p. 23). Apart from a brief introduction instructing the reader on how to approach the narrative sections, the book's substantive introduction follows the first narrative. It would have been useful to know Drummond's objectives before I launched into her description of a court circuit in Kuujuaq, but perhaps I was displaying the same impatience she observed in the itinerant judge. Beginning with a narrative description of a typical court circuit does have the effect of drawing the reader into the book, although I found that the division of the first narrative into main text and subtexts made for somewhat disjointed reading.

Drummond writes that while her book is "ostensibly an investigation into the accommodation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal legal systems" (p. 22), her objectives are much broader than that. For Drummond, a study of conflicting legal systems requires the examination of concepts of justice and injustice, and must root out the multifaceted sensibilities underlying these concepts, including social, cultural, and gender-based factors. In examining justice in an intercultural setting, *Incorporating the Familiar* strives to "help us to understand what viable legal pluralism might look like" and to "evoke an instance of the possibilities for a humane society" (p. 22).

In covering the substantive topics noted above, the book's three sections are designed to explore "three zones where the familiar and the unfamiliar merge," and to examine "the incorporation of the other's sense of reality into history, the other's sense of self into intimacy, and the other's sense of injustice into law" (p. 22). The narrative accounts that begin each section tell stories intended to ground the subsequent theoretical sections. I found the stories to be compelling accounts of the topics at hand, easy to read, yet still powerful in evoking images of the circuit court, family violence, and a sentencing circle.

*Incorporating the Familiar* is well researched, and Drummond's analysis can be illuminating. For instance, her conception of accommodation as a complex, multidirectional process recognizes the intercultural reality of Nunavik, where Inuit and *Qallunaat* will likely continue to

interact regardless of who has control over formal justice processes. Drummond must also be commended for tackling the issue of violence against women and investigating the complexities of delivering justice and healing in ways that respect culture and gender. Overall, however, the theoretical sections are dense, and the point of each is often mired in the diverse lenses through which Drummond conducts her analysis. This breadth of analysis, while impressive, obscures the central themes of the book, and ultimately frustrates Drummond's objective of "helping us understand" justice in an intercultural setting.

The theoretical sections of the book also assume the reader's knowledge of a number of terms and concepts drawn from her areas of analysis. For example, Drummond devotes some of her study to "ethnography," but it is never clear whether she purports to be writing from an ethnographic perspective, or what such a perspective entails. Unless the reader is familiar with terms such as toponymy, historiography, solopsism, *habeas corpus* and so on, it helps to have a dictionary close at hand in unravelling Drummond's complex use of language. Alternatively, a glossary would have been helpful. Drummond also assumes a certain knowledge of legal institutions and developments. For example, she refers to "the (pre-C-31) Indian Act" (p. 85), taking for granted her readers' knowledge that this legislation was amended in 1985 by Bill C-31.

In the end, I found this book to be a very challenging read. *Incorporating the Familiar* took me down untrodden pathways in my thinking about issues relating to justice in a crosscultural setting and, in this sense, forced me to merge the familiar and unfamiliar. However, the book's relative inaccessibility means that it will offer little to those working on the ground to implement practical solutions to problems of justice in the North, and in Aboriginal communities more broadly.

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